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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Notice of Intent to Request Approval to Establish a New Information Collection.

AGENCY: National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations, that implement the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) intention to request approval to establish a new information collection for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must be received by [65 days from date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER], to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Written comments may be submitted by any of the following methods: E-mail: rmartin@nifa.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0857; Mail: Office of Information Technology (OIT),

NIFA, USDA, STOP 2216, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW,
Washington, DC 20250-2216.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Martin, Records
Officer; E-mail: rmartin@nifa.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program.

OMB Number: 0524-New.

Type of Request: Intent to request approval to establish a
new information collection for three years.

Abstract: The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)
program at United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
makes competitively awarded grants to qualified small
businesses to support high quality, advanced concepts
research related to important scientific problems and
opportunities in agriculture that could lead to
significant public benefit if successful.

The USDA SBIR Program Office proposes to contact Phase II
awardees to determine their success in achieving
commercial application of a market ready technology that
was funded under the USDA SBIR Program. The survey would
collect information from Phase II companies that received
funding during the years of 1994 to 2014.

Data from the survey will be used to provide information

that currently does not exist. The data will be used internally by the USDA SBIR Office to identify past and current activities of Phase II grantees in the areas of technology development, commercialization success, product development or services, and factors that may have prevented the technology from entering into the market place. Depending on the results of the survey, information from the survey will be used to highlight commercialization successes within the small business community; improve and refine program interactions with, and responsiveness to, the small business community; potentially refocus the strategies that are used to accomplish SBIR objectives for commercialization; and identify areas in need of improvement and enhancement. This survey will not be used to formulate or change policies. Rather, it will be used to enable the USDA SBIR Office to be responsive to its constituents and document successes within the USDA SBIR Program.

The objectives of the SBIR Program are to: stimulate technological innovations in the private sector; strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting Federal research and development needs; increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from USDA-supported research and development efforts; and foster and

encourage participation by women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged small business firms in technological innovations.

The USDA SBIR program is carried out in three separate phases:

1. Phase I awards to determine, insofar as possible, the scientific and technical merit and feasibility of ideas that appear to have commercial potential.
2. Phase II awards to further develop work from Phase I that meets particular program needs and exhibits potential for commercial application.
3. Phase III awards where commercial applications of SBIR-funded Research/Research and Development (R/R&D) are funded by non-Federal sources of capital; or where products, services or further research intended for use by the Federal Government are funded by follow-on non-SBIR Federal Funding Agreements.

The USDA SBIR Program is administered by NIFA of the USDA. NIFA exercises overall oversight for the policies and procedures governing SBIR grants awarded to the U.S. small business community, representing approximately 2.5% to 2.8% of the USDA extramural R/R&D budget. This

represents approximately \$201M in Phase II grants awarded to the U.S. small business community from 1994 to 2014.

Plan

A total of 499 USDA SBIR Phase II grants were awarded to small businesses between 1994 and 2014, and the USDA SBIR Program plans to contact past Phase II awardees to determine their success in achieving commercial application of a market ready technology under Phase III.

The survey will be administered through a USDA led contract where a contractor will perform an initial web based survey administered through a secure Internet link with a telephone interview and/or in person interview as a follow-up with SBIR Phase II grantees. Both the web based survey and telephone/in person interviews will consist of a series of questions that relate to the commercial status of the technology developed with USDA SBIR Phase II funding as well as general questions regarding the USDA SBIR Program. The USDA SBIR Program office will coordinate the initial contact with the Phase II companies in an effort to introduce the scope of the survey, provide straightforward instructions and facilitate the

survey work that the contractor will initiate and complete. Phase II companies that do not respond within two weeks to the initial contact from the USDA SBIR Program Office will be sent a second request by email or by phone to respond. It is envisioned that the contractor would then conduct the web based survey and interviews thereafter.

Estimate of Burden: NIFA used burden estimates administered through contractor led web based survey to estimate the burden for SBIR, but anticipates the transactions for project initiation may be reduced because grant application information will be used to prepopulate many fields. The total annual burden for the SBIR Program collection is 2500 hours.

Types of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Frequency of response	Average time per response Hours	Annual burden hours requested
USDA SBIR Phase II Grantees	500	1	5	2500

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request to OMB for approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Obtaining a Copy of the Information Collection: A copy of the information collection and related instructions may be obtained free of charge by contacting Robert Martin as directed above.

Done at Washington, DC, this 23rd day of March, 2015.

Catherine E. Woteki,
Under Secretary,

Research, Education, and Economics

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